

DAVID R. CRAIG
HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

LORRAINE T. COSTELLO
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



DATE: April 29, 2008
CONTACT: Mary F. Chance, 410-638-3389

REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT - ONE BIKE RIDE AT A TIME

(Bel Air, MD - April 29, 2008) - - The term "carbon footprint" has become tremendously popular over the last few years and is now in widespread use across all media. As more emphasis is being placed on saving the environment the case for reducing our carbon footprint is becoming firmly entrenched in the American psyche. Fortunately, there is an easy solution to reducing our carbon footprint that can be accomplished one person at a time, one bicycle trip at a time.

Cycling is a wonderful carbon-neutral method of transportation and can be ideal for many people. Apart from zero CO₂ emissions, cycling provides great exercise, which is good for your weight and your heart.

Harford County residents tend to link bicycle riding with recreational purposes- a leisurely Sunday activity on the Ma and Pa trail or children riding around their neighborhoods after school. However, more and more folks are using their bikes to commute to work. Bicycle commuting works for most people who live fifteen miles or less from their workplace and have identified safe routes to work. What they are finding is a very energizing and relaxing mode of transportation. Commuting by bicycle also saves a bundle of money, especially in today's economic climate where oil is going for \$118 per barrel. The average cost of keeping an automobile running for a year is \$3,000 or more; for a bicycle it's less than \$300 annually. These are very appealing numbers when the price of gas continues to rise.

Up until the last few years, those who did use their bicycles to get to work in Harford County were literally risking their lives; but times are changing. The State Highway Administration has been including cycle lanes in their new and upgraded road designs as well as providing "share the road" signage to create safer routes throughout the County. These changes will give confidence to more people and will allow them to use their bikes as a safe mode of transportation. It makes cyclists feel more secure and encourages others to join the trend. Cycle sales keep increasing, and it is common to see people going on vacation with a cycle rack on the back of their cars. The more people using bicycles, the fewer cars are on the road, which means a reduction in carbon emissions and less traffic congestion.

The Rails to Trails Conservancy reports that nearly half of all trips in the United States are three miles or less. Just using a bike to get to and from the short errands can significantly reduce your carbon footprint. The biggest hurdle in forsaking your car for a bike is your first

ride. But before you know it, you'll be running errands via bicycle and contemplating riding to work in the cold, the rain and the snow - anything to avoid driving.

On **Friday, May 16, 2008**, join Harford County and the State of Maryland in showing your support for reducing our carbon footprint by celebrating **Bike to Work Day**. This is the signature event for May as Clean Commute Month and, on this day Harford County Government, the Department of Community Services and the Harford Commuter Assistance Program are sponsoring a rally from 7:00-9:00 am to highlight the significance of using a bicycle as a viable transportation alternative. The rally will be held at the Administration Building, 220 South Main Street in Bel Air. For more information, or to register for the event, visit us online at www.harfordcountymd.gov or click on the Bike to Work Day icon.

High gas prices and the ongoing concern for the environment have prompted an increasing number of environmentally sensitive residents to focus attention on active transportation such as cycling to get to work and run their errands. Just as significant is the growing awareness that individually and collectively we can easily make a difference to reduce our carbon footprint. We hope to see you at Bike to Work Day!